

for the delivery of public lectures on anatomy and surgery." Why not have added, and for delivering Hunterian orators of Hunterian orations. Some of the former, I consider, should be born again, in order to learn a little of midwifery, before they examine in this branch of our profession, and many of the latter should not be delivered at all. I will not complain, however, as the last was stifled in its birth! But more on midwifery subjects, as far as they regard this College, hereafter.

The next sum, the House of Commons is instructed, was also not granted to the College, but to his Majesty. "12,500*l.* to be paid to the court of assistants of the Royal College of Surgeons in London, to enable them to complete the erection of a museum and theatre, with an appropriate front, in Lincoln's Inn Fields." I conclude, therefore, as his Majesty did not subscribe anything towards the back-front in Portugal Street, that this is the reason why it is so very inconvenient, and certainly not more appropriate, than Sir William's and Sir Everard's busts in the portals of the museum. And here I cannot forbear mentioning, what will perhaps surprise many of your readers, that the latter, whom the bust represents, is not yet lost to all sense of propriety; for after having burned the Hunterian manuscripts, he is said to be ashamed of the refutation of the College.

Not content with a museum and theatre, with an appropriate front in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which might have been built for 27,500*l.*, especially as the ground had already been purchased, the College, of course, could not do anything derogatory from the dignity of its character; consequently, the next thing to be done was, to convince his Majesty and the House of Commons, that the munificence so liberally granted, was not at all required. And, in the next item, I observe, "together with the additional sum of 30,500*l.*, and upwards, from the fund of the College;" making, in the whole, 58,000*l.* There is not any person who would object to the expenditure, provided the money thus expended had not been acquired under false pretences. With the sum of 30,500*l.* in hand, and an immense revenue constantly coming in, to support the dignity of the College by begging! For my own part, I consider, if this be a specimen of the good conduct of the Council of the College, Mr. Peel must produce another memorial, to convince the House of Commons of the truth of the statement. It is reported of Horne Tooke, that when he was required by the commissioners of the property tax, to show how he contrived to maintain so large an establishment, with so small an income as that which was returned in his schedule, his answer was, that there

were three ways by which it might be done; *begging, borrowing, and stealing*; but he had not the audacity to bring forward a memorial to show, that each or any one of the three, was a proof of good and honourable conduct!

VIRGINIUS.

THE LOST PELVIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The account of the disappearance of a most valuable pelvis, by rats, given by Mr. John Davies of Hertford, in THE LANCET, is of so very extraordinary a nature, that, in common with every one I have heard speak on the subject, I think some further explanation necessary.

Mr. Davies' statement is, that he took home the pelvis, ("the most perfect specimen of *mollities ossium*,") to clean for Dr. Davis; that he put it into a pan to macerate, and, in about a fortnight after, found that the rats had devoured the whole of it, "except a few pieces of the hardest parts."

The particulars of this case have been, for a long time, known in the profession, and I wish, therefore, to make a few observations on Mr. Davies's own statement. That such a rare and valuable specimen of morbid anatomy, intrusted to his care, as a pelvis with *mollities ossium*, connected, too, with a recent midwifery case, which must have been daily the subject of conversation, should have excited so little interest in his mind, as to be thus neglected for a fortnight, to be devoured by the rats, must appear to every one most surprising; for Mr. Davies does not state that the rats devoured it at one meal. If, from such negligence, the extraordinary catastrophe (merely for sake of argument) be allowed to have occurred, what is more natural to every conscientious upright man, than immediately to have informed his friend, and have produced the "few pieces of the hardest parts" remaining of the pelvis, as proof and confirmation? I have understood that conduct, the very reverse of this, was pursued by Mr. Davies; that after repeated applications by Dr. Davis for the pelvis, some months had elapsed, when this wonderful story was given in explanation. As Mr. Davies has brought this subject before "the tribunal of the profession," as he expresses it, it is evident that the above observations must be answered, in a satisfactory manner, before any true judgment respecting it can be formed; for, if repeated applications were made in vain for this valuable pelvis—if these "few pieces of the hardest parts" of it remaining were never shown, or offered to be shown, then

there was cause sufficient for the manner in which Dr. Davis spoke respecting it.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. L. FENNER.

54, Penton Street, April 7, 1828.

BILL FOR THE REGULATION OF LUNATICS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Neither the profession generally, nor those most immediately concerned, seem at all aware of the nature and provisions of a bill, to “Regulate the Care and Treatment of Insane Persons,” which has been introduced into the House of Commons *sub silentio*, and having passed with some amendments, is now in the House of Peers.

At a period when applications are being made to Parliament, to provide for the means of pursuing anatomical dissections, the profession should know in what estimation they stand.

Since the Parliamentary inquiry, in 1815-16, into the state of lunatic asylums and private houses, a great many of the most respectable members of the profession, have entered upon the study of insanity, and undertaken the charge of the insane. Some have expended very large sums of money, even as high as 15,000*l.*, in rendering their establishments what the legislature, in the debates on receiving the report of that inquiry, seemed to desire and encourage.

Without any further inquiry, however, except as to the condition of the Pauper Lunatics of three parishes in one of Mr. Warburton's houses, and without knowing whether any general improvement has taken place in public or private establishments, this bill was framed. The Committee also refer to the evidence adduced in the years 1807, twenty-one years ago!! and 1815, thirteen years ago! (Vide Parl. Report, 1827.) The original bill is dated March 3. Among many other extraordinary regulations, it thus provides:—

1. The executive is to be transferred from the College of Physicians, to the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

2. Fifteen Commissioners are to be annually appointed, by the Secretary of State, for the London district, of whom *one-third* only are to be of the medical profession. And four visitors are to be annually appointed by the justices at the Quarter Sessions of every county; three to be justices, and only *one* a medical man. Neither commissioners nor visitors can act for two successive years.

3. Every certificate of lunacy is to be signed by *two* medical men, not in consultation, but on *separate* visits.

4. Every medical man, whether a proprietor, or merely attending the lunatics in a house, is to see each lunatic *daily*, ill or well, and enter such visit in a house register, together with his opinions and remedies, medical and moral; and why, and when, and how long, coercion is used in every case.

5. Every lunatic establishment, public or private, except Bethlem Hospital only, may be visited *night* or day; the medical attendant, servants, &c., may be examined *on oath* on the spot; and if they refuse to answer any questions, they are liable, on conviction before *one* magistrate, to a fine of 40*l.*

6. A Coroner's Inquest is to be held on every patient that dies.

7. The clergyman of the parish is to have the right of visiting houses at any hour between eight in the morning, and eight in the evening.

8. If a *lunatic* desire spiritual consolation, the physician *must* allow it, or enter in the register his reasons for refusing.

9. Every discarded, or discontented, servant, is invited to become an informer, for which purpose he may be acquitted of all liabilities, from the consequences of his own guilty participation or negligence, and is to have half the penalty.

10. All prosecutions against a proprietor, if he chooses to appeal from the justice, are to be tried at the County Quarter Sessions, from which court he is to have no power of appealing; but the plaintiff may prosecute in any way, or in any court of England he pleases.

11. A medical man, who is a proprietor, is exposed, besides forfeiture of license, and pecuniary fines, to be accused and convicted on not less than eight misdemeanours, and is open to actions for damages as heretofore.

12. Finally; if he refuse, or is unable, to pay the fines and consequent expenses of prosecution, he is to be committed to the House of Correction for months, and to be kept to hard labour at the *tread mill!!!*

This bill, I have said, is amended, and some of the penal causes modified. The last enactment is altered, and the committal and tread-mill omitted. But enough remains to show, that no confidence in the medical character, or medical skill, exists in that branch of the legislature which has passed this measure.

In fact, if it pass into a law, no medical gentleman, who values his reputation, can become either the proprietor of, or professional attendant on any lunatic asylum, charitable establishment, or private house; and those who now are thus engaged, must, by necessity, soon relinquish the charge.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

EXCURITOR.

April 14, 1828.